

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

P.O. BOX 154,
STANTHORPE, Q., 4380.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1980 - 1981

PRESIDENT	Robin McCosker
VICE PRESIDENTS	Colin Hockings John O'Donnell
SECRETARY	Graham Greenup
TREASURER	Dot Archer
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Jean Harslett
NEWSLETTER SUB-COMMITTEE	Janet Hockings Ian Jackson
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GEOLOGY OFFICER	Maurice Passmore
YOUTH OFFICER	Ruth Greenup
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	Ray Marsden
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	Frank Wilkinson Lyle Thompson David Pfrunder Tom Archer Desley McDonagh Jean Harslett

MEETINGS - 4th WEDNESDAY of each MONTH at C.W.A. ROOMS at 8 P.M.

OUTINGS - Each SUNDAY PRECEDING the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of the Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

SINGLE - \$ 4.00

FAMILY - \$ 6.00

AIMS OF THE CLUB

1. TO STUDY ALL BRANCHES OF NATURAL HISTORY.
2. PRESERVATION OF THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF QUEENSLAND.
3. ENCOURAGEMENT OF A SPIRIT OF PROTECTION TOWARDS NATIVE BIRDS, ANIMALS AND PLANTS.
4. TO ASSIST WHERE POSSIBLE IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.
5. TO PUBLISH A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING.. WEDNESDAY 24th. September, 1980.PRESENT:-22.APOLOGIES:- 4. Both as per attendance book.MOTION:- Minutes of the previous meeting were read by the secretary. Moved by Mrs. Marsden and seconded by Mr. Davis that these minutes be confirmed..... Carried.CORRESPONDENCEINWARD:-

1. Letter from the society for Growing Australian Plants, Fortitude Valley, thanking us for sending flowers to the S.G.A.P. Queensland Region Flower Show earlier this month.
 2. Letter from Qld. National Parks and Wildlife Service regarding their investigation into the legislation pertaining to the keeping moving and buying and selling of birds in this State. This was referred to general business.
 3. Also from Qld. Nat Parks and W.S. two brochure "Wildlife in Your Back Yard" and "Wildlife on Rural Land" and a "Rainforest Bird Key".
 4. Ten Press Statements from the Minister for Culture and National Parks and Recreation These include a. one covering the regulations referred to above in 2. b. Scenic Rim National Park. c Storm King Dam.
 5. Newsletter from Richmond Valley Naturalist Club, Sept 1980.
 6. Down Under, the Newsletter of the University of Qld Speleological Society.
 7. Darling Downs Naturalist, Journal of the Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club.
 8. Aug. and Sept. Journals of N.P.A. News.
- OUTWARD
1. Letters to Radio Station 4QS requesting broadcast of outing and meeting times.
 2. Letter to Stanthorpe C.W.A. thanking them for granting us a concession on rent.
 3. Letter to the Manager of "Pikedale, thanking him for allowing us entry to Pikedale for our August outing.

MOTION

Moved Lyle Thompson and seconded Don Lightfoot that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted... Carried.

GENERAL BUSINESS:- The questionnaire from the Q.N.P. & W.S. concerning the keeping etc. of native birds was discussed. The secretary is to complete the questionnaire expressing our views namely, that legislation concerning rare birds (eg Turquoise Parrot) be enforced and the fines increased. It was considered that the ban on export of common species did little more than annoy people and in fact just keeps the bird smuggling industry going

MINUTES Cont.

Robin McCosker reported on the Mount Norman outing. (See full report later) Numbers were down a bit owing to the fact that a number of regulars attended a Stanthorpe Re-union, in Brisbane.

Robin McCosker also reported on the outing on the 7th. Sept. by Tom Spiller which was arranged to the Caves area as a place much enjoyed by our late member Miss Joan Westcott. This small extra outing has been arranged each year with this significance. Thank you Tom for your efforts in this respect.

NEXT OUTING.

PLACE Mount Colliery area.

LEADER Mr. Ray Marsden.

Date 19th. October 1980.

DEPARTURE TIME:- WEEROONA PARK at 9 A.M.

**YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS
NOW DUE**

NEXT MEETING. October 22nd. at 8pm. C.W.A. Rooms. Jean Harslett will present an illustrated talk on "Treking in Kashmir "

Financial REPORT

Somehow I have left this till last (The best things shall be left to last !! just as well it is at the beginning of the year and not the last !!!)

The Treasurers report for September.

Aug 27th.....	\$123.88	..\$123.88
Receipts August Subs.....	\$82.00	
Room rent Collection.....	\$4.10...	Total \$86.10
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$209.98</u>

Payments Aug. Magazine Postage.....	\$5.94.
July Duplication Magazine	\$5.00
Room rent Aug. Meeting	\$4.00
Hire of Projector. ...	\$5.00
	<u>\$19.94.</u>

September Bank Balance.....	\$ 190.94
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Accounts passed for payment..Room rent....	\$6.00
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Magazine duplication Aug. & Sept.....	\$10.00
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Moved by Dot Archer that the treasurers report be adopted and the accounts be passed for payment, seconded by Joan Stephenson..... Carried.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.15 pm..

Mr. Denis Marsden then presented an interesting showing of slides of Central Queensland, thence to Northern Qld, of his travels there recently.

REPORT ON GUEST SPEAKER. Denis showed us pictures of areas of western Queensland which are usually only rather scantily covered, pictorially, & also gave an account of the way of life in the country and town areas near Winton. This had good human interest. The colours of this rather dry terrain were later complimented by the brilliance of the country side in the north and coastal regions. This gave one a very good feeling for the contrasts in scene and in ways of life... Thank You Denis.

J.H.

OUTING REPORT ON MOUNT NORMAN
BY.ROBIN Mc.COSKER.PRES.

Our September outing was to Mount Norman and I'm sure the ten intrepid hikers who made up our small but enthusiastic party enjoyed the day. The weather was most kind except for a gusty South Westerly wind which tried to prove itself more forceful than gravity upon those who climbed to the top. Fortunately no-one became unstuck, but there were some shaky moments. Some high thin sirius clouds blew over during the day, also from the South West, and the normally spectacular view from the top was almost obliterated by smoke from the various bushfires raging in many quarters around the horizon. It is very distressing to note that a serious fire has swept through most of the Girraween National Park, on the eastern and Pyramids side.

The journey on the way to Mount Norman parking area was interrupted briefly when we came across a group of Sus scrofa, two large ones presumably boar and sow with a litter of about eight. We stopped and jumped out of the cars, not really knowing what to do next, when a call from Colin set us off in pursuit, but of-course, to no avail. The hot dry conditions we are experiencing will no doubt, if they continue this summer, lead to a real resurgence of damage to the park by wild pigs. This in turn must affect the population of native species of birds and animals. Evidence of this was seen surprisingly close to the top of Mount Norman, where feral pigs have torn up large areas which would normally be the habitat of the Superb Lyrebird.

In spite of the dry conditions, the hike along the well marked track was rewarded by many species of wildflowers in bloom. Of special note were the Boronias in full bloom, around the base of Mount Norman, some over three metres high. We viewed "The Eye of The Needle", then six members climbed to the highest point, the top of Mount Norman, while other members were content to go part of the way, or to enjoy the scene while waiting just immediately below. An indication of the drought was that both pools at the "Trig" point were completely dry. On the way back down we were treated to a marvellous display by a Peregrine Falcon whose antics and loud alarm calls indicated that it may have been protecting its nest from our intrusion.

After lunch we made our way back to the cars and continued along the road towards Wallangarra. We stopped on the way and scrambled down to a cool gully where I had heard a Lyrebird on the pre-outing trip, but this time without luck.

The next stop was to inspect the Beehive Dam, the water supply for Wallangarra, and then off home.

Robin McCosker.

Thank you Robin for such a full report, it will be much enjoyed by those unable to attend, because of the Stanthorpe Reunion in Brisbane the date of which coincided with this September outing.

OCTOBER OUTING.

Mr. and Mr. Marsden intend to do a preouting this weekend on our behalf, but unfortunately the findings will be too late to include in this bulletin. The Marsdens have of course "up-to-their-necks" with the highly successful Scout. Olympics, just staged in Stanthorpe. Though we may not have the benefit of the written word, we will certainly benefit from their care in planning the outing.

Plans are to leave Weeroona Park at 9 am. and travel via Tannymorel to the Colliery area. Lunch will be had in the vicinity of the cars, hence you may take whatever goodies you wish, regardless of weight.

See you There !!

MEMBERSHIP.

If you haven't paid your membership yet, please note that our constitution is such that we do not send bulletins after a (3) months lapse. Also from the practical aspect we cannot afford to keep sending them out.

GREETINGS:- Seen at the Stanthorpe Reunion our old friend and member Mrs. Aileen Mc. Allister. She looked well, was in good spirits and particularly wished to be remembered to her Nats. friends

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KANGAROO TWINS:

Mr. Col. Aiken "Dalmoak" Thulimbah reported seeing a doe with what appeared to be twins of about three months old. Both bundled into the pouch with apparent confidence and habit, but not without a little disorder, caused by obvious reasons of 'housing' and the modern problems of lack of it, and of overcrowding. Mr. Aiken who is a keen and accurate observer, and had never seen twins before, was keen to have information. (and proof he wasn't seeing double!!) Contacted Dr. Kirkpatrick an Australian authority on marsupials and his reply was that, "Yes they certainly do have twins". He has bred in captivity twins. The occurrence is about the same as in human beings, about 1 in 1,000, but the chances of survival for many obvious reasons are a great deal less.

The Kangaroos amazing ability to conceive, but not have the new life develop until the right conditions promise, can, in very unusual conditions (but not usual) can have two offspring of very close age. However this amazing system would break down if this was to occur too regularly.

RABBITS (of yore) Two items ex The Stanthorpe Border Post may be of interest and give an indication of how quickly they adapted to this area.

Border Post 9th April 1909. "On Tuesday we saw a rabbit that had been killed quite close to the town in country at the back of the Cemetery. (Looks like Tom and Dot had nice pastures way back then.) The editor commented that this is the first from this area, though he understands that they are plentiful to the south of the town and the district

RABBITS CONTINUED.

Four years and two months later it is interesting to note in the same press this news item.

BorderPost 20th.June 1913. The Rabbit question is becoming very serious. They are becoming a serious pest and very numerous. MR. Walsh, Shire Chairman, has deemed it necessary to call a public meeting to discuss this increasing menace. The Public Meeting will be held at the Shire Hall on Saturday 21st June 1913 at 2.30 pm. Main topics are "What should be Done with Regards to the Rabbit Question." Should we be paying fees to the Carnarvon Rabbit Board ?.

(It is rather interseting to read how concerned Robin feels with the pig problem a comparatively new invasion for us (in damaging numbers) as recorded in his report in this newsletter. Could parallels been drawn ? . I would also like to record it is not many years ago that Robin's brother Leon rang up, and asked about a strange 'tunnel' of grass on his newly acquired property at Dalcouth. So few pigs were seen at this stage in our district that, nobody was quite sure what it was.

White Possum Yet another little historical note again ex the Border Post .On the 26th.June 1908 Mr.Potts of tThe Wheal Edith Mine, showed the editor of the BP a white possum. It had fur on the back of yellowish or creamy white colour, and underneath it was pure white, the ears were pink. It had been shot before they knew what it was. This is the first white possum from this part of the State".

Might I also comment upon this news item (Not only to fill up space!) but because I have mused upon it myself. The only white possum that I have seen, was shown to me and found in the vicinity of which this fellow lost its life. My question is, was it a descendant?

This particular chap was reported to the curator of Lone Pine Brisbane and he came up to see it and take it back. The last I saw of it, it was comfortably settled in an air-conditioned car, enjoying the strains of soft music, so I suppose its end was better than the first example, though perhaps that is open to argument, too.

Have other members seen white possums and if so it would be interesting to know the locality. The one I saw was found on a property on the Mount Tully Road, close to the Sugarloaf Road. This area is not far removed from the old Wheal Johnson Mining Company.

In 1913 Mr.B.Rickaby Saddler was advertising horse-hair fly veils excellent for the fly pest, light and very durable... Maybe we could do with one just now !

Yours in Nats

Jean Harslett.